

A close-up photograph of two pink flowers with five petals each, growing from a forest floor covered in brown, decaying leaves and twigs. The flowers have yellow centers with stamens. The background is slightly blurred, showing more of the forest floor and some other small pink flowers in the distance.

# The Naturalist's Notebook

03/01/2021

Calkins Nature Area





Trail on 3/3



Turkey Track



Turkey Sighting

## Trail Conditions:

### Moderate to Poor

As the snow begins to melt along the trails at Calkins Nature Area, be leery of slick spots and muddy spots along the trails. Trail heads with slope tend to be the mushiest spots as we wait a few weeks for full melt to finish. Be sure you bring your boots.

## Things To Do:

### Visit Animals, Hike Trails, View Birds, Look for Tracks

1. Visit rehabilitations animals near the entrance of the park. Many of our critters have just come out of hibernation and torpor, so they are excited to see visitors. Reptile room closed due to COVID-19
2. Hike trails on days where conditions are warm (bring your boots).
3. Bird viewing along trails. Eagles and Trumpeter swans have been spotted around the nature center. Pileated woodpeckers have also been spotted sporadically on ridge tops.
4. Animal tracking along trails. There are plenty of turkey, deer, raccoon, opossum, and other wildlife tracks to find in the snow at this time. Bring your kids out for some fun tracking animals through the forest.

## Wildlife Sightings

### Rankings are based on seasonal commonality

Common— black capped chickadee, white breasted nuthatch, house sparrow, house finch, dark eyed junco, northern cardinal, downy woodpecker, blue jay, red bellied woodpecker, eastern fox squirrel, eastern cottontail rabbit

Somewhat Common— eastern wild turkey, hairy woodpecker, white-tailed deer, bald eagle, white throated sparrow

Unusual— racoon, virginia opossum, groundhog, american mink, hungarian partridge

Rare— pileated woodpecker, trumpeter swan



## Upcoming Programs:

### Lunch and Learn Programs

12 pm to 12:30 pm on March 20th and 27th

### At Estes Park in Iowa Falls

Join us at Estes Park in Downtown Iowa Falls on Saturday March 20th and Saturday March 27th from 12 pm to 12:30 pm for Socially Distanced Lunch and Learns! Bring your lunch to the park, take a seat, and learn about some unique wildlife with Calkins' Nature Area staff members. The first weekend we will be discussing the unique characteristics of otters, the habitats they call home, and why they are an important species for our aquatic ecosystems.

Weekend two will be all about foxes and coyotes. Foxes and coyotes are most active throughout the spring because it is their breeding season. Learn about the behavior of our wild canines, some of the key features that make foxes and coyotes different, and how we utilize predator hunting and trapping to control the booming populations of these sly carnivores.

## General Things to Remember:

- Reptile room and nature center facilities remain closed.
  - Skiing season is now over due to trail conditions.
- Outdoor facilities are available sunrise to sunset, 7 days a week now that we have hit the spring season.
- Seeing normally nocturnal animals out during the day is COMMON this time of year. Racoons and opossums are emerging from their winter sleep and actively search for food during the warmest hours of the day.
- The snow has uncovered some dead deer on our trails from this winter, please stay away from those as best as possible.